Met Office

April 2016

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1981-2010.

UK overview

At the start of April, the UK's weather was unsettled and dominated by low pressure, with frequent showers and some longer spells of rain. This unsettled regime continued into the second week, with low pressure to the south-west in the Atlantic drawing in an easterly airstream. The second half of April was mostly cold, bright and showery with frequent northerly winds, although there was a brief warm sunny spell in central and northern areas between the 19th and 22nd. Sleet and snow fell unusually widely for late-April between the 26th and 29th, with some accumulations even at lower levels in the north-east accompanied by sharp frosts.

The UK mean temperature was 6.5 °C, which is 0.9 °C below the 1981-2010 long-term average, and all regions were colder than average. Rainfall was 107% of average, and it was generally wetter than average in eastern areas, particularly near the east coast of Scotland, but it was drier than average in south-west England. Sunshine was generally near or slightly above average, and the UK had 109% of average sunshine overall.

The UK monthly extremes were as follows: A maximum temperature of 20.3 °C was recorded at Porthmadog (Gwynedd) on the 21st. A minimum temperature of -5.6 °C was recorded at Kinbrace (Sutherland) on the 28th. In the 24 hours ending at 0900 GMT on the 2nd, 86.6 mm of rain fell at Seathwaite (Cumbria). A wind gust of 57 knots (66 mph) was recorded at High Bradfield (South Yorkshire) on the 6th. A snow depth of 9 cm was measured at Leadhills (Lanarkshire) at 0900 GMT on the 29th.

The image below shows lying snow in Quebec, County Durham on 27 Aprl 2016. The daily maximum temperature at nearby Copley (County Durham) was only 5.3 °C. Image courtesy Lindsay Kittens

Weather impacts

Thunderstorms affected north Essex, south and east Suffolk on the 12th, and lightning strikes and torrential rain affected the activities at Ipswich Hospital. A lightning strike caused the failure of the hospital's pager system and flooding affected some computers. Thunderstorms also affected parts of Kent on the 13th, and a Morrison's supermarket in Canterbury was evacuated after the building was reported to have been twice struck by lightning during the afternoon.

On the 15th, localised surface water flooding from heavy downpours was reported to have caused traffic disruption and long travel delays in parts of Greater London during the evening rush hour.

During the last week of April, a cold, northerly airflow introduced arctic air across much of the UK bringing wintry showers and overnight frosts. From 25th to 27th, some high level routes had some limited snow, with the temporary closure of a couple of the highest and most prone routes.

An Atlantic low pressure system introduced some more persistent snow across parts of Scotland on 28th and 29th. Very difficult driving conditions were reported as the band of rain, sleet and snow moved across northern parts of the UK, with the combination of snow and wind leading to blizzard conditions on some main routes. The island of Mull was badly affected by lying snow, with reports of cars being trapped in snow and ferries unable to run due to the closure of the access road. Some road traffic collisions were reported on higher routes in Cumbria, and snow was also reported to have caused some limited travel disruption in Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Derbyshire, West and North Yorkshire, and north Wales.

England diary of highlights

April began unsettled with frequent showers and some longer spells of rain, and this unsettled theme persisted for most of the first half, but it was often quite warm in the south. The second half was often cool and showery, but with a warm sunny interlude in central and northern areas between the 19th and 21st. Wintry showers fell unusually widely for the time of year between the 26th and 29th.

The mean temperature for April was 0.8 °C below the 1981-2010 long-term average. Rainfall was below average in the south-west but generally above normal in the north and east, with 107% of average overall. Sunshine was mostly near or slightly above average, and England as a whole had 108% of average sunshine.

1st to 8th:

It was dry, sunny and quite warm in the south-east on the 1st, but cooler and cloudier elsewhere, with some rain spreading into the south-west, the north Midlands and northern England. The 2nd was dull and wet over much of Wales and northern England, the rain slowly spreading northwards, while the south-east remained sunny and warm before more rain spread northwards during the evening. The 3rd had some persistent rain in the north-west and sunshine and showers elsewhere. The 4th had sunshine and thundery showers after early rain spread north along the east coast. Cloud and light rain slowly cleared the north-east on the 5th, with sunshine and isolated showers elsewhere. The 6th had sunshine and blustery showers, the showers wintry on high ground and in the north-west, with gusts of 66 mph at High Bradfield (South Yorkshire). A band of persistent rain over the Midlands cleared away southwards on the 7th, followed by sunshine and showers. The 8th was quite a warm day, sunny in the east, with some scattered showers developing in the morning, before patchy light rain spread into western areas in the evening.

9th to 14th:

The 9th was a cooler day, with rain clearing the east coast, followed by brighter weather, then showers spread from the south-west. The 10th turned wet and windy over the south and west with thunderstorms in west Cornwall, but it was dry, sunny and quite warm elsewhere. The 11th was sunny in the south-west, but cloudy elsewhere, with rain for the south-east and east Midlands, and patchy light rain in the north, and it was generally warm. It stayed warm on the 12th, but with widespread rain in the north and east, and 33 mm of rain fell at Hull East Park (Humberside), while showers developed in central parts. Dull and wet weather persisted in the far north on the 13th, but elsewhere it was bright and warm with scattered showers. After a dry start on the 14th, thundery showers spread eastwards across central parts, and widespread persistent rain reached southern counties by evening.

15th to 22nd:

The 15th started wet across southern counties, and turned colder from the north, with snow on high ground. Early rain cleared the south-east on the 16th, followed by sunny spells and wintry showers, the showers heaviest and most frequent in the east. After a widespread frost on the 17th, a dry sunny day followed. Cloudy skies and a little patchy light rain spread south on the 18th, but there was a cold sunny start in the south-east and it was sunny in the far north. The 19th started cloudy in the south, but cold and clear elsewhere, then it was dry, sunny and much warmer than of late. The 20th was dry, sunny, and warm in the north and west, with 13.4 hours of sunshine at Whitby (North Yorkshire), but it was very windy in the south-west. Cloud spread as far north as the Midlands on the 21st, with rain in the south-west, but it was dry, sunny and warm in the north with 19.7 °C at Levens Hall (Cumbria). It was generally dry and sunny but cooler in the north on the 22nd, after an overnight frost, while it was cloudy and wet all day in the south.

23rd to 30th:

The 23rd was cooler and increasingly showery in eastern parts but stayed sunny in the south-west. Rain in the south-east cleared early on the 24th, leaving sunshine, but rain and hill snow spread into the north-west. The 25th was cloudy with rain at times in the south, brighter with showers in the north, and cooler with strengthening northerly winds. The 26th was cold with sunshine and wintry showers, and some lying snow on high ground.. The 27th was another day of sunshine and frequent wintry showers. The 28th started cold and clear, with -5.2°C overnight at Topcliffe (North Yorkshire), turning wet from the west from mid-morning, the rain heaviest from the Midlands northwards, patchier over the south, and with snow on high ground. The 29th saw cloud and persistent rain over the north turn more showery, with sunshine and showers over the south,

and there was snow in places with 6 cm of lying snow at Bingley (West Yorkshire). The 30th was less cold, with some sunshine, but widespread showers, some heavy and thundery, developed away from the south-west.

Wales diary of highlights

April began unsettled with frequent rain or showers, and this changeable theme continued for most of the first half of the month, with temperatures generally near normal for the time of year. The second half of the month was often bright and cool, but with a warm sunny spell in central and northern areas between the 19th and 22nd. Wintry showers fell unusually widely for late-April between the 26th and 29th.

The mean temperature for April was 0.7 °C below the long-term average. Rainfall and sunshine were both close to normal overall, but it was wetter than average in the north and drier than average in the south. Wales as a whole had 98% of average rainfall, and 113% of average sunshine.

1st to 7th:

The 1st started dry and cloudy, then became wet and windy, with 34.4mm of rain at Whitechurch (Pembrokeshire) and gusts to 62 mph at Capel Curig (Conwy). It started wet everywhere on the 2nd, but turned dry, sunny and warm in the south as the rain cleared northwards. The 3rd was cloudy and quite warm, with rain spreading from the south. The 4th was another warm day, and it started dry and quite bright, then thundery showers spread from the south. It was mostly dry and bright on the 5th, Aberporth (Ceredigion) recording 11.8 hours of sunshine. The 6th had sunshine and showers, with frequent showers in the north, heavy in early evening. The 7th started cloudy and wet, but the rain cleared southwards followed by sunshine and showers.

8th to 14th:

The 8th was mostly dry and cloudy, with rain spreading to all parts by early evening. The 9th was quite a cool day, with sunshine and showers, the showers wintry in places but clearing away by mid-afternoon. The 10th began dry and sunny but it clouded over, with some rain in the evening, particularly in the south. The 11th was a cloudy, wet and quite windy day, though it dried up from the south. The 12th was cloudy in the far north-east but otherwise dry, sunny and quite warm. The 13th was sunny and mostly dry but with patchy rain spreading from the south-west by late evening. It was dry and sunny in the north on the 14th but showery across southern parts, while staying quite warm.

15th to 22nd:

The 15th was cool and mostly cloudy with showers merging into longer spells of rain, especially in the north. The 16th continued cool with widespread sunshine after early patchy rain cleared. The 17th was dry and sunny after a widespread frost, with an overnight minimum of -4.3°C at Sennybridge (Powys). The 18th was mostly dry but cloudy. The 19th started cloudy but became sunny and warm by late morning. It was dry, sunny and warm on the 20th with temperatures exceeding 18 °C in places, and Hawarden (Flintshire) recorded 13.5 hours of bright sunshine. The 21st was cloudy with patchy rain in the south, but it was warm and sunny in the north with a maximum of 20.3°C at Porthmadog (Gwynedd). It was sunny again in the north on the 22nd but cloudy and wet in the south, the rain clearing by late evening.

23rd to 30th:

The 23rd was mostly dry and sunny but generally cooler. The 24th was a dry day, feeling warmer with widespread sunshine. It stayed cool and bright on the 25th, but with increasingly frequent showers and strengthening northerly winds. The 26th dawned cold and frosty, then a chilly day followed with sunshine and showers, the showers wintry especially over high ground. The 27th had another cold and frosty start with wintry showers developing throughout the day. It was wet in the north early on the 28th, then became showery (some of the showers wintry) everywhere from late morning. After a cold start on the 29th, it

remained cool with showers, some wintry, and some sunshine. The 30th was warmer with sunshine, but also showers, some heavy and thundery.

Scotland diary of highlights

April began unsettled, with strong winds at times, and temperatures mostly close to the seasonal average, and this theme continued for much of the first half of the month. The second half was often cool and bright with wintry showers, although there was also a brief warm sunny spell from the 19th to 22nd. Snow fell unusually widely during the last week and there were some accumulations even at lower levels.

The mean temperature for April was 1.0 °C below the long-term average. Rainfall was 109% of average, and it was a wet month in the east, but the west had near or slightly below average rainfall. Sunshine was above average in the south and west, but near normal elsewhere, with 109% of average overall.

1st to 7th:

It was cloudy, cool, wet and windy for the 1st with 104.6 mm of rain at Alltdearg House (Isle of Skye), but the north-east was drier and brighter. The 2nd had rain over the Borders, moving slowly northwards from late morning, but it was dry and sunny further north. It was mostly cool and cloudy on the 3rd, with showery outbreaks in the south-west. The 4th was cloudy, cool and increasingly wet, with the rain heaviest in Fife and Tayside. The 5th was generally wet, but with some brighter spells along the west coast, and it was dry over Orkney. There were widespread blustery showers with hail on the 6th, and snow on high ground, but also some sunny spells. The 7th was a day of sunshine and showers but the showers died away into the evening.

8th to 14th:

After a cloudy but bright start in places on the 8th, with coastal showers becoming widespread during the morning, more general rain spread in from the west during the afternoon. Rain persisted in the north on the 9th, with snow on the hills, but elsewhere it was mainly dry and sunny, before showers developed into the evening. It was dry, sunny and fairly warm in the south on the 10th, but cloudy and cooler with patchy rain elsewhere. Dry and sunny over the Western Isles on the 11th, cloudy elsewhere with patchy rain over the east coast, and more general rain reaching the Borders by evening. It was dry and sunny in the north on the 12th but with cloud and rain in the Borders and near the east coast. The 13th stayed sunny and dry in the north but was wetter in eastern parts. It was generally cloudier and cooler on the 14th with showers turning wintry in the far north.

15th to 22nd:

It was much cooler on the 15th, with early rain clearing, followed by brighter weather and wintry showers with snow to low levels. A cold day followed on the 16th, with sunshine and wintry showers, and snow fell widely in the north. The 17th started dry and bright with a frost for some but it turned increasingly wet and windy in the north-west. It was windy on the 18th, with a gust to 62 mph at Sella Ness (Shetland), with sunshine and showers, the showers wintry over the hills. The 19th started frosty in many places, and was a dry and sunny day in the south and east, but cloudier in the north-west with patchy light rain. Cloud and patchy rain persisted in the far north on the 20th, but it was otherwise dry, sunny and warm with 14.7 hours of sunshine at Drummond Castle (Perthshire). The 21st was similar, but generally a few degrees warmer in the south with Barwhillanty (Kirkcudbrightshire) reaching 19.2°C. It stayed sunny in the west on the 22nd, but turned cooler with showers in the north-east.

23rd to 30th:

The 23rd was a cold and bright day for most, but with wintry showers in the far north, which were replaced by cloudier conditions and patchy rain. It was bright and breezy on the 24th, with wintry showers in the north producing some lying snow in places, and there were gales across the Pentland Firth. It was increasingly cold,

showery and windy on the 25th with 59 mph winds at Inverbervie (Aberdeenshire), and the showers were wintry, with lying snow in some places. The 26th dawned cold and frosty, and a day of sunshine and wintry showers followed with lying snow on high ground. The 27th also began frosty, with sunshine and wintry showers during the day. The 28th started with a widespread frost, with a minimum of -5.6°C at Kinbrace (Sutherland), and the far north had another day of sunshine and wintry showers, but it turned cloudy and wet elsewhere from mid-morning with sleet and snow falling even to low ground. The 29th was cloudy and wet, with some sleet and snow, over the south-east, but elsewhere it was brighter with wintry showers. The 30th was less cold, with a dry sunny start followed by widespread showers.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

April began generally cloudy and unsettled with frequent rain, and this theme continued for muchof the first half of the month. The second half of the month was often cold, bright and showery, but with a warm sunny spell from the 19th to 22nd. Wintry showers fell unusually widely for the time of year between the 26th and 29th.

The mean temperature for April was 1.3 °C below the long-term average. Rainfall and sunshine were both generally close to average, with 105% of average rainfall and 102% of average sunshine overall.

1st to 7th:

It was wet everywhere on the 1st, clearing away from the west by dusk, but not before Trassey Slievenaman (County Down) had recorded 36.7mm of rain. The 2nd started dry and cloudy, then rain moved up from the south, reaching all parts by evening. The 3rd was a cool, cloudy and showery day, particularly in the Belfast area. The 4th was generally cloudy too, and it was wet in the west with early rain turning into thundery showers over County Antrim. The 5th was a mostly dry day with sunny spells, but rain spread in from the west late in the day. The 6th had heavy blustery showers and some sunny intervals, with a gust to 59 mph at Killowen (County Down). The 7th was a day of sunshine and blustery showers, but the showers died out in the evening.

8th to 14th:

The 8th was cool and cloudy with rain spreading to all parts by lunchtime, before brighter showery weather followed from the west in the afternoon. The 9th had a mix of sunshine and showers, following a widespread overnight frost. The 10th was generally dry and sunny after a frosty start, which saw a minimum of -4.7°C at Lough Navar (County Fermanagh), but it turned cloudy and windy in the south-west. Wet and windy weather dominated on the 11th, turning drier by evening but staying cloudy. The 12th was cool and cloudy with rain throughout the morning, heaviest across the Antrim Mountains. The 13th was another cloudy day, with patchy rain in the north throughout the day. Cloud and rain cleared slowly southwards on the 14th, followed by cooler brighter showery weather.

15th to 23rd:

The 15th was a cold day with patchy rain or showers, but also some sunny intervals. The 16th was cold and bright with scattered wintry showers. The 17th had an early widespread frost, but cloud and patchy rain spread from the west, with strengthening winds in the north by evening. The 18th was breezy with patchy rain but also some sunny intervals. The 19th started frosty, but became dry, sunny and much warmer than on recent days. It was dry, sunny and warm on the 20th, with 13.8 hours of sunshine at Magilligan (County Londonderry) and a maximum of 17.8 °C at Castlederg (County Tyrone). The 21st was another warm dry sunny day with maximum temperatures locally above 17 °C. The 22nd was cooler, particularly in the north and east, but remained sunny and dry. The 23rd was dry with sunny intervals but much cooler, particularly in the north.

24th to 30th:

The 24th was a cool day with some sunny spells and scattered light showers. The 25th was cool and showery, with strengthening northerly winds, particularly near north-facing coasts. The 26th had a patchy overnight frost, followed by a day of sunshine and wintry showers, the showers heaviest and most frequent in western areas. The 27th was another cold day following overnight frost, with sunny intervals and wintry showers. The 28th started wet and cloudy, then turned brighter with further wintry showers. The 29th was another cold day with sunshine and showers, some of these showers again being wintry. The 30th was warmer, again with a mix of sunshine and showers.

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